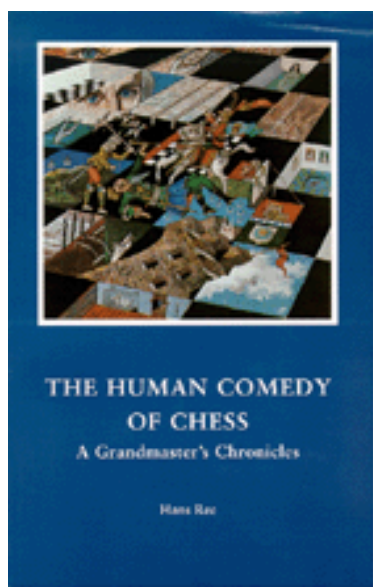




C O L U M N I S T S

Dutch Treat

Hans Ree

*The Human Comedy
of Chess*

Noble Savage

A prodigal son has returned to chess. Julio Granda Zuniga hadn't played a serious game since 1998, but this month he took part in the Peruvian championship, which he easily won, scoring 12 points out of 13 games.

True, the opposition wasn't up to his standard. Mario Belli, who came second with 8 out of 13, is a 2400 player. But 12 out of 13 is impressive anyway and one may hope that for Granda this has been a training tournament to prepare him for the hunt for greater game. The chessworld will gladly welcome him back, for he is a remarkable player.

He is not one of those who says that chess is his life. This is already apparent from his four years absence and also from the way he used to talk about chess in the past. Professionally he was a tree grower and his great passion seems to have been soccer, more than chess. In 1996, in an interview with Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam for *New in Chess*, he mused about his childhood dream of playing for the Peruvian national soccer team. "Who knows what might have happened, but chess stopped me."

He brought a soccer ball to the Dubai Olympiad of 1986 and to the European tournaments where he went from there. But with the exception of Agdestein, who has played for Norway's national soccer team, the other chessplayers were not very good and lacked true spirit: "At the beginning of the tournaments everyone was very enthusiastic, but after a few days they preferred sleeping or drinking." Kasparov was singled out by Granda as a poor soccer player: "He has no idea. Running a lot but no concept."

When he was a child a chess manual had been forced on Granda by his father and he had read it reluctantly. Also later, when he was already a grandmaster, he didn't like to study. He didn't own

by **Hans Ree**

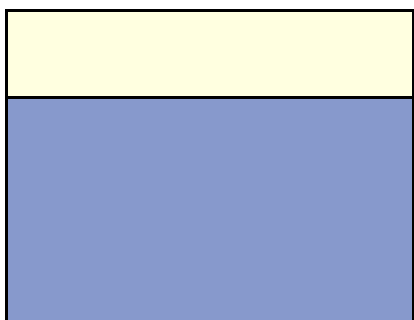


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a laptop and only skipped through chess magazines, never playing over a game on a board.

His finest successes were gained in tournaments to which he had been invited more or less by accident. For the strong Reshevsky Memorial tournament in New York in 1992, all three Polgar sisters were invited (though Sofia preferred to play a match with Maurice Ashley). At the time Granda was Zsuzsa Polgar's boyfriend, so Joel Benjamin suggested to the organisers that they might as well invite Granda, thereby making the Polgar family complete and happy.

An excellent idea that Benjamin came to regret, as Granda made mince-meat of the American participants. He won the tournament with 7 out of 9, a half-point ahead of Judit Polgar.

During the preparations for the second Donner Memorial tournament in Amsterdam in 1995 one of the organisers, Bert Breuker, caused surprise by insisting that Julio Granda Zuniga from Peru was a very interesting player who absolutely had to be invited. Why him? asked the others. Granda wasn't exactly world-famous and as he was born in 1967, he wasn't a promising junior anymore either. But Breuker insisted and the others granted him his pleasure.

Granda won the tournament together with Jan Timman, who only caught up with him in the last round. The next year the third and last Donner Memorial was won again by Granda, who this time shared first place with Vassily Ivanchuk.

Stories abounded about his lack of interest in opening theory. One day, on his way to the tournament hall in a car driven by Bert Breuker, he was said to have asked if his opponent of that day, Yasser Seirawan, was playing 1. e4 or 1. d4.

I doubt if this story is true. Breuker had a habit of feeding the journalists with tasty little anecdotes that were often invented. To paraphrase the Russians, every Russian schoolboy knows that Seirawan is not a 1. e4 player. Granda should know that too, for in the past he had already played Seirawan at least three times. Let's say that the story was symbolically true, for Granda certainly had an impressive lack of opening knowledge.



At these Donner tournaments he was the public's darling, for a noble savage who played the openings haphazardly and then handled the middlegame and the endgame like a young god, appealed to the imagination. And he played beautiful games of course.

Here is one of his finest victories. Tim Krabbé, who compiled a collection of "The 110 Greatest Moves Ever Played", gave Granda's ninth move the 20th ranking.

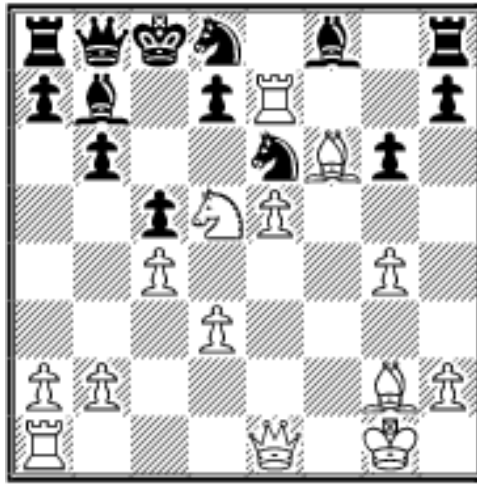
White: Granda Zuniga Black: Seirawan, Buenos Aires 1993

1. Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 2. c2-c4 c7-c5 3. Nb1-c3 e7-e6 4. g2-g3 b7-b6 5. Bf1-g2 Bc8-b7 6. 0-0 Nb8-c6 7. e2-e4 e6-e5 8. d2-d3 g7-g6



9. Nf3xe5 A stunning move that resembles a gambit that in recent years gained some popularity in frivolous circles of the *Internet Chess Club*: 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Nxe5?! **9...Nc6xe5 10. f2-f4 Ne5-c6 11. e4-e5 Nf6-g8 12. f4-f5** So White has a pawn and a strong initiative for his piece, but of course it is not at all certain if his sacrifice was

correct. An attempt at refutation should begin with 12...Rb8, after which Seirawan in his notes in Informant 57 gave 13. e6 dxe6 14. fxe6 f5 (or 14...f6) 15. Rxf5 Qd4+ 16. Rf2 as the main line. His verdict: unclear. **12...Ng8-h6 13. Nc3-e4 Nh6xf5 14. Ne4-f6+ Ke8-e7 15. Nf6-d5+ Ke7-e8 16. Nd5-f6+ Ke8-e7** Now White has a least a perpetual, but of course he was not aiming for a draw when he played his daring 9. Nxe5. **17. g3-g4 Nf5-d4 18. Qd1-e1 Qd8-b8 19. Nf6-d5+ Ke7-d8 20. Bc1-g5+ Kd8-c8 21. Rf1xf7 Nd4-e6 22. Bg5-f6 Nc6-d8 23. Rf7-e7**



A curious position. Black's pieces are awkwardly placed, but he has one extra. Seirawan gave 23. Bxd5 24. cxd5 Bxe7 25. Bxh8 and now 25...Nd4 or Nf4 as best play and the battle would still rage on. **23...Rh8-g8 24. Re7-e8 Bb7-c6 25. Bf6xd8 Ne6xd8 26. Nd5-f6 Rg8-h8 27. Bg2xc6 d7xc6 28. Qe1-e4 Qb8-c7 29. e5-e6**

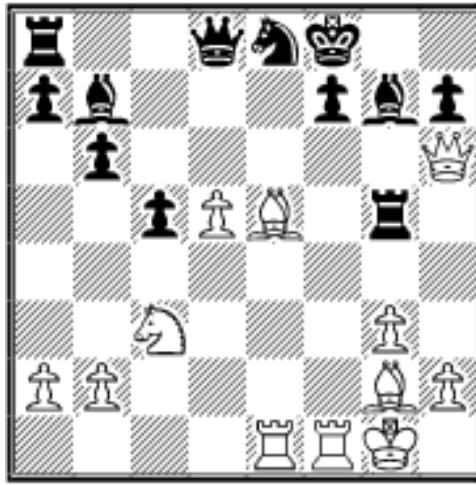
Very nice. This can be

considered the apotheosis of White's strategy. With 9. Nxe5 White cleared the way for his e-pawn that is now going to promote to a Queen. **29...Bf8-g7 30. e6-e7 Rh8xe8 31. Nf6xe8 Bg7-d4+ 32. Kg1-h1 Qc7-d7 33. Ne8-d6+ Qd7xd6 34. e7-e8Q a7-a5** It is still a difficult position. With two pieces for the Queen Black can put up stubborn resistance. **35. Ra1-f1 Ra8-a7 36. Rf1-f8 Ra7-d7 37. Qe4-e6 Qd6xe6 38. Qe8xe6 Kc8-c7 39. Qe6-e2 Bd4-g7 40. Rf8-f2 Bg7-d4 41. Rf2-f3 Nd8-f7 42. Rf3-f4 Nf7-d6 43. Kh1-g2 Nd6-c8 44. b2-b3 Rd7-e7 45. Rf4-e4 Re7-f7 46. Qe2-e1 Rf7-d7 47. Qe1-g3+ Kc7-b7 48. h2-h3 Rd7-f7 49. h3-h4 Rf7-d7 50. Re4-e6 Bd4-c3 51. Qg3-f3 Nc8-d6 52. Qf3-f8 Nd6-c8 53. Re6-e8 Rd7-c7 54. Re8-d8 Bc3-g7 55. Qf8-e8 Bg7-f6 56. Rd8xc8** Black resigned.

And here is the first game played by Granda after his four-year absence. It seems to be just the right game to get into the mood for more chess.

White: Granda Zuniga Black: Cotrina Moscoso, Peruvian championship, Lima 2002

1. Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 2. c2-c4 e7-e6 3. g2-g3 b7-b6 4. Bf1-g2 Bc8-b7 5. d2-d4 c7-c5 6. d4-d5 e6xd5 7. Nf3-h4 g7-g6 8. Nb1-c3 Bf8-e7 9. c4xd5 d7-d6 10. 0-0 Nf6-d7 11. Bc1-h6 Nb8-a6 12. Nh4-f3 Na6-c7 13. e2-e4 g6-g5 14. e4-e5 Nd7xe5 15. Nf3xe5 d6xe5 16. Bh6-g7 Rh8-g8 17. Bg7xe5 Be7-f6 18. f2-f4 Ke8-f8 19. Qd1-h5 Nc7-e8 20. Ra1-e1 Rg8-g7 21. f4xg5 Rg7xg5 22. Qh5-h6+ Bf6-g7



23. Rf1xf7+ Black's play has made no great impression and this sacrifice is nice and easy, ideally suited for a player who must have been somewhat rusty. 23...Kf8xf7 24. Qh6-e6+ Kf7-f8 25. Re1-f1+ Bg7-f6 26. Be5xf6 Ne8xf6 27. Rf1xf6+ Kf8-g7 28. R f6-f7+ Kg7-h8 29. Rf7xb7 Qd8-g8 30. Nc3-e4 Black resigned.



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